

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indicated allowability of claims 2-10 is noted with appreciation. Rewriting of the claims in independent form is being deferred as allowance of claim 1, for the reasons discussed below, would preclude the need to do so..

Claim Objections

As suggested, the claims have been amended to conform to U.S. patent language.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claim 1 has been rejected as being unpatentable over US 6,948,479 (Raney et al.). Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested in that Raney et al. does not qualify as prior art. The effective date of Raney et al. as a reference is September 1, 2004, whereas the subject application is a national phase of a PCT application filed on September 6, 2003 which claims priority of a European application dated September 9, 2002.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

/Don W. Bulson/

By _____
Don W. Bulson, Reg. No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113

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